

REMARKS

This amendment is being filed along with a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) in response to the final Office Action having a mailing date of August 20, 2008. Various claims are amended as shown. No new matter has been added. Claims 12-16 were previously canceled without prejudice. With this amendment, claims 1-11 and 17-34 are pending in the application.

I. Discussion of the claims and cited references

The final Office Action has rejected claims 1-5, 8, 17-20, 25, 29, and 33-34 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Redd (U.S. Patent No. 6,646,754) in view of Carroll (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0142350). Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Redd in view of Carroll and further in view of Lutz (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2005/0076298). Claims 7, 27, and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Redd in view of Carroll and further in view of Ferlitsch. Claims 9 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Redd in view of Carroll and further in view of Kremer (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0158655). Claims 10, 23, 24, 26, 31, and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Redd in view of Carroll in view of Hansen. Claims 11 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ferlitsch in view of Hansen and further in view of Shaw (U.S. Patent No. 5,602,974). Claim 30 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Redd in view of Carroll, further in view of Hansen, further in view of Ferlitsch.

For the reasons set forth below, the rejection of the claims on the basis of the references as set forth above is respectfully traversed. Therefore, it is kindly requested that such rejections be reconsidered and withdrawn.

A. Independent claim 1

Independent claim 1 as previously presented recited, *inter alia*, "separately sending said each batch having stamps applied to its electronic document pages to a client

terminal to be printed, while electronic document pages of other batches of said print job are having stamps applied to them.” Such recitations correspond to the example and non-limiting illustrative embodiment(s) described in the present application, wherein while a particular batch (which has already had stamps previously applied to its documents) is being printed at a printer, the other batch(es) that are awaiting to be printed are having stamps applied to them. Once these other batch(es) have finished having stamps applied to them, these batches are in turn spooled/sent to the printer to be printed. Such features provide a type of multi-tasking (stamping documents of one batch, while another batch from the same print job is being printed), so as to improve efficiency in printing.

It is believed that claim 1 as previously presented was allowable over Redd, since Redd (as will be further explained below) does not apply stamps before printing, to documents that are awaiting to be printed, while another batch (having documents with stamps already applied thereto) is being printed. Instead, Redd applies “non-image information” to documents after they have completed printing.

Nevertheless, to facilitate prosecution and to make claim 1 further allowable over the cited references, claim 1 is presently amended as shown. In particular, claim 1 as amended herein recites, *inter alia*, “before printing, applying stamps to the electronic document pages of each batch of said print job” and “separately sending said each batch having said respective stamps that have been applied to its electronic document pages to a client terminal to be printed, while electronic document pages of other batches of said print job that are awaiting to be printed are having their said respective stamps applied to them.” It is respectfully submitted that Redd and the other cited references do not meet these limitations.

In rejecting claim 1 on pages 2-3 (section 3), the final Office Action cites Redd’s column 17, line 40 to column 18, line 15 as allegedly meeting the “applying stamps...” limitation, and further cites Redd’s column 19, lines 26-52 as allegedly meeting the “separately sending said each batch ... to be printed, while electronic document pages of other batches ... are having stamps applied to them.” These allegations by the final Office Action are respectfully traversed herein.

Redd discloses a system/technique to print images, such as digital images for photographs. Column 17, line 40 to column 18, line 15 of Redd, which describes his “non-image information” that appears to have been interpreted by the final Office Action as being the same as the claimed “stamps” of claim 1, is reproduced below (emphasis ours):

“In step 508, each image is instantiated (e.g., by creating a separate copy of data such as control and/or image data for that image) as needed for printing. For example, if desirable, a given image that is to be printed for multiple recipients can be instantiated at least once for each of the multiple recipients (e.g., for each sub-order and/or for each sub-batch). In addition, or alternatively, if the printer on which a given image is to be printed can operate in a more efficient manner (or if it is otherwise desirable to do so), an image that is to be printed multiple times on given printer can be instantiated once for each time that the image is to be printed.

In step 510, each image is printed (or a physical manifestation of each image is otherwise created) in accordance with the print ordering. The printing operation includes printing or otherwise generating a physical representation of the image (e.g., printing the image on the front side of an image print). Printing can also include printing or otherwise including non-image information (e.g., bar codes, identification numbers, messages, advertisements, reorder information, etc.) on one or more of the prints or other physical manifestations of the image. The non-image information can be used for controlling and monitoring the printing, packaging, and/or shipping of the image and/or can be used to impart predetermined information to the recipient of the image. For example, as shown in FIG. 8, non-image information may be printed on the back (i.e., non-image side) of an image print 920 and may include a unique identification number 922 for the image from which the print was made (i.e., an ‘image

ID' number), a unique order identification number 924 (which may encode recipient information), reorder information 926 such as a phone number 928 and/or a URL 930 for a website from which prints can be reordered, a bar code 932 (encoding, for example, an audio message or processing data), and/or a user specified message 934. Also, a different user specified message 934 can be printed for different recipients (e.g., one message can be printed for the person who took the image and other messages can be specified for the other recipients). In addition, the non-image information may include the name of the photographer who took the image, the date the image was taken, the date the image was printed, a copyright notice, and language describing any legal restrictions on using the image."

From the above-quoted passages of Redd, it is apparent that his "non-image information" is printed "on one or more prints" of the image and that his "non-image information" includes "the date that the image was printed." By this very language/teaching(s) in the above-quoted passage of Redd, it is inherent/explicit that his "non-image information" must be printed on an existing printout of the image. Indeed, in order for his "non-image information" to include "the date the image was printed," the printing of the image must necessarily occur before the "non-image information" is applied to the image print-out. Accordingly, this passage of Redd does not meet at least the limitations in claim 1 that require "before printing, applying stamps to the electronic document pages of each batch of said print job" and "other batches of said print job that are awaiting to be printed are having their said respective stamps applied to them." These limitations from claim 1 make it clear that the stamps are applied to documents that have not yet been printed.

In further support of the argumentation that Redd applies his non-image information to printed documents, rather than applying the non-image information to documents that have not yet been printed (e.g., to documents that are awaiting to be printed), the following

teachings of Redd are to be noted. Starting with column 5, lines 43-59, Redd teaches the following (emphasis ours):

“In another aspect, a backprinting system may include a front-end computer sub-system for receiving an order specifying one or more recipients and, for each specified recipient, a set of one or more images associated with that recipient. The system also may include a scheduler, in communication with the front-end computer sub-system and the plurality of printers, that, for each recipient specified by the order, separates the images associated with the recipient into at least one printable unit of images. The system may further include one or more printers, in communication with the scheduler, for printing each image in a printable unit on a first side of an image print. Moreover, the system may include one or more backprinters, each backprinter receiving one or more image prints from at least one of the one or more printers and backprinting on the other side of the one or more image prints. Each backprinter may backprint non-image information on the one or more image prints.”

From the above-quoted passage from column 5, lines 43-59 of Redd, it is abundantly clear that his “backprinters” that print “non-image information”: (a) receive “image prints,” which means that his backprinters receive hardcopy print-outs (images that have already been printed), (b) receive the image prints “from at least one of the one or more printers” that printed the image prints, which means that his backprinters are coupled to outputs of the printers so as to receive their hardcopy print-outs of the images, and (c) backprint the non-image information “on the one or more image prints,” which means that the backprinters are applying the image prints to existing/physical print-outs of the images.

Indeed, Figure 10 of Redd shows that his backprinter 634 is located downstream of his printer 622 that prints the images into hardcopy print-outs, such that his backprinter 634 receives the output (print-outs) of the printer 622. His backprinter 634 is also located

downstream of his curl reduction equipment 635 that “inhibits the natural curling of the image prints due to drying so that the image prints are flat during backprinting.” *See, e.g.*, column 26, lines 23-26 of Redd. These additional teachings of Redd further make it abundantly clear that he is therefore applying his non-image information to existing hardcopy print-outs of the images that have been printed by his printer 622.

In view of the above, Redd therefore does not meet the limitations of claim 1 that require “before printing, applying stamps to the electronic document pages of each batch of said print job” and “separately sending said each batch having said respective stamps that have been applied to its electronic document pages to a client terminal to be printed, while electronic document pages of other batches of said print job that are awaiting to be printed are having their said respective stamps applied to them.” Hence, claim 1 is allowable.

B. Discussion of other independent claims

Independent claims 17 and 29 are amended in a manner generally similar to claim 1 (using varying language), and are allowable by way of analogy based on the reasons set forth above.

C. Other claim amendments

Various other amendments are made to the claims as shown to provide to more precisely recite the subject matter contained therein and/or to otherwise place such claims in better form.

III. Conclusion

Overall, none of the references singly or in any motivated combination disclose, teach, or suggest what is recited in the independent claims. Thus, given the above amendments and accompanying remarks, the independent claims are now in condition for allowance. The dependent claims that depend directly or indirectly on these independent claims are likewise allowable based on at least the same reasons and based on the recitations contained in each dependent claim.

If the attorney of record (Dennis M. de Guzman) has overlooked a teaching in any of the cited references that is relevant to the allowability of the claims, the Examiner is requested to specifically point out where such teaching may be found. Further, if there are any informalities or questions that can be addressed via telephone, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Mr. de Guzman at (206) 622-4900.

The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

All of the claims remaining in the application are believed to be allowable. Favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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